

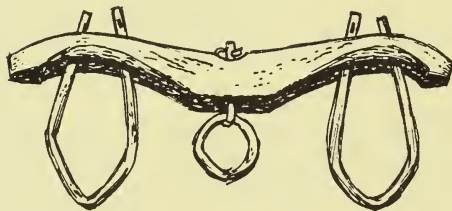
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Abraham Lincoln.

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Abraham Lincoln



By

Emma Julia Scott

Washington, Ill.



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Abraham Lincoln

(The following history of Abraham Lincoln was prepared by Miss Emma Julia Scott and was published in the Tazewell County Reporter in its issues of February 6 and 13, 1936.)

The greatest man in the world is not the man who accumulates the most money or the most power; it is not the man who takes the most out of life; it is the man who gives the most to life. His true riches are estimated, not by that which he leaves to his sons, but by that which he leaves to his fellow men as a heritage for the generations to come.

Courage, fortitude, sacrifice, sympathy, love—these are the price of immortal greatness:—they lie in the heart of man.

It is with this measure of a man that we look upon the American boy who journeyed from the humblest log/home, along the road of life, to an everlasting abiding-place in the heart of humanity; who overcame the greatest obstacles that can beset man; who carried on his shoulders a burden that weighed down the world. His life proves to all generations the power of an indomitable will and a resolute purpose; that man, when he conquers himself, can conquer the world. He learned early that man is his own

master; that with his conscience clear and his mind clean the future will take care of itself and even death is conquered.

The safest capital on which to begin life is good and sound morals. This is the capital upon which Abraham Lincoln began. His father (Thomas Lincoln) was a woodsman who could neither read nor write; his mother (Nancy Hanks) was an orphan girl. His cabin home of rough-hewn logs sheltered but a single room; but here, on the banks of Nolen creek, in desolate Harding county, Kentucky, he started on life's journey, Feb. 12, 1809. Abraham Lincoln was seven years old when with his little sister Sarah he trudged behind his father and mother from the Kentucky wilds into Southern Indiana, where with an ax they cut their way through the dense forests to start life anew as a claim in the savage wilds of Little Pigeon Creek and felled the trees for a new cabin. The bare earth, which turned to mud in the winter thaws was its floor. This little lad fell asleep on the heap of loose leaves—and called it home. Think of the grief that lay in the heart of this boy as he knelt sobbing beside his dying mother October 5, 1818, as she laid her hand on his young head and whispered the last message from those loving lips; "Be good to your

father and sister. Be kind to one another. Be somebody and worship God." You know what was in his heart when in after years he bowed his head saying "God bless my angel mother, all I am or hope to be I owe to her."

Life's lessons are not all learned in a university. The backwoods is the university that made Abraham Lincoln.

At ten years of age he was walking nine miles a day to and from the little log schoolhouse in the woods. At night he lay before the fireplace ciphering on a wooden shovel and scrawling his name on the logs of the cabin. A new world, the world of knowledge had been revealed to him. He had made the first great discovery of his life. That in books you cannot be alone for your's can be the intimate friendship of the world's greatest men.

This greatest American acquired his education from but a few books. The Bible, Shakespeare, Plutarch, Josephus, Life of Washington and Webster's spelling book.

In mastering these works he developed a purity, lucidity, and force of style which President and Chief Justice William Howard Taft said, "has never been equalled in the annals of statesmen."

The Lincoln style had an import-

ant part in making him a great statesman and his Gettysburg address (Nov. 19, 1863), a masterpiece of the world's literature.

This was Lincoln's education—strong as a giant, a heart like the oak, and a head full of common sense; ready and eager to fight it out with destiny.

He made his first dollar at 18 years of age. Every man must make his own place in the world. The man who is not interested in public affairs cannot hope to succeed. Lincoln laid the foundation for his own success when he discovered the power of citizenship. Failure is but the closed door to success, try again and you may open it. We are today only what we made ourselves yesterday.

There is no man so strong that he cannot be won by gentleness.

Lincoln's mastery of himself was his greatest safe guard in life. The one dominant note in his character was hope. He believed that hope was the saving grace in humanity. "Free labor has the inspiration of hope, pure slavery has no hope," Work is man's greatest friend. The power of hope upon human exertion and happiness is wonderful."

Lincoln with his parents moved to Decatur, Illinois in 1830. He clerked in a store at New Salem. In 1833 he was appointed postmaster

and retired from that position in 1837, having been licensed to practice law and commenced his practice in Springfield, Illinois in April, 1837.

The framers of our Constitution were elected as delegates by the states—65—55 only served, and to this day the fame of the men they chose is one of the glories of American history.

William E. Gladstone's opinion was that the Constitution of the United States was the most wonderful work ever struck off at a given time by the brain and purpose of man. It has always had its critics, but it has remained since its birth the wonder of the world.

George Mason of Virginia, according to the historian Bancroft, was the dominant mind in the convention and he credits him with writing scores of clauses and thirteen of the amendments, yet in the end he refused to sign and urged his state to reject the Constitution for the reason that it did not include a prohibition of slavery.

Our Constitution was the slow process of wisdom, yet it did not enable the men to see in this lack—a radical defect which would lead the nation into Civil war before it was corrected.

George Washington, the presiding officer of the convention, as he

stood pen in hand, ready to sign the engrossed copy declared that should the states reject the Constitution there would never again be an opportunity to offer another in peace, "The next will be drawn in blood."

Lincoln was elected to the Illinois state legislature in 1834 and to each succeeding term until 1847, when he was elected a member of the United States congress from Illinois. A solitary Whig among seven Democrats. Abraham Lincoln and Andrew Jackson, were in the House of Representatives and Stephen A. Douglas and Jefferson Davis in the United States senate. 1849 the debates were exciting—excluding slavery from the territories. In 1854 the threat to repeal the Missouri Compromise stirred him as he had never been stirred before. Then he again entered the arena and became the candidate for the U. S. senate. The oratory of this strange, serious man seemed to inspire the hope of the people. His appeal was always one of peace. He recognized that slavery was an established institution, but he believed that it was unworthy of the high principles of American self government and that in the interest of civilization we should dissolve the institution by purchasing the chattles from their owner and extending liberty and freedom to all men,

regardless of color or race. "Our political problem now is—can we as a nation continue together permanently—forever—half slave and half free; the problem is too mighty for me. May God superintend the solution," he remarked prophetically.

At the convention in Bloomington, Illinois May 29, 1856, when the Republican party was organized, Lincoln held his hearers spell-bound. Hear him as he raises his arms and shouts—"We must make this a land of liberty in fact as it is in name!"

In 1858 Abraham Lincoln and Stephen A. Douglas were candidates for the United States senate from Illinois. They held seven joint debates on the issues of the campaign. The people were all aroused and went far to hear him.

Mr. Douglas—"I don't care whether slavery be voted up or voted down—I don't believe the negro any kin of mine at all."

Mr. Lincoln—"When the white man governs himself, that is self-government; but when he governs himself and also governs another man, that is more than self government—that is despotism;" "No man is good enough to govern another without that other's consent." Repeal the Missouri Compromise, repeal all compromises, repeal the

Declaration of Independence, repeal all past history, still you cannot repeal human nature."

The problem of slavery which had been suppressed by politicians for a generation was brought to its first crisis. Stephen A. Douglas, the Little Giant's career was now brought to a halt for the first time; not by a man who wished to obstruct him, but by one who heard the cry of humanity ahead and challenged him for the right of way. I know there is a God and He hates injustice and slavery—If he has a place and work for me—and I think He has—I believe I am ready, I am nothing, but truth is everything.

"I contemplate slavery as a moral, social and political evil," "Whoever teaches that the negro has no share in the Declaration of Independence is blowing out the moral lights around us." We have to fight this battle upon principle alone. A house divided against itself cannot stand. It will become all one thing or all the other. Lincoln fully realized the difference between himself and his opponent, who was 5 feet, 4 inches, well groomed, and he 6 feet, 4 inches, ungainly in figure and clothes uncouth. The crowds cheering and jeering.

The man who dared to fight a superior foe but who had already won

half the battle and that day stepped into greatness.

Mr. Douglas (at Galesburg Oct. 7, 1858) had spoken one hour and when Mr. Lincoln arose Mr. Douglas said, "How long, O Lord how long," to which Mr. Lincoln replied, "The days and the years of the wicked are short." With Cowper, "A man renowned for repartee will seldom scruple to make free with friendship's finest feelings." "Is slavery wrong?" It is the eternal struggle between these two principles—right and wrong, throughout the world. The one is the common right of humanity, the other the divine right of kings." It is the voice of Lincoln, resonant, gentle, appealing. The battle of human emotions rose and fell before these vast audiences, with intense heat and fury.

In this series of debates Mr. Lincoln so maneuvered his questions to Mr. Douglas that the latter finally found himself in a position where the manner to which he answered meant his own probable election to the senate in the immediate campaign or the angering of the Southern vote to such an extent as to defeat him in his prospective campaign for the presidency. Douglas chose the former course.

Then came the voice of the people—the ballot, and Lincoln lost.

This is another instance in a man's life when defeat is good fortune. The defeat had cost Lincoln nearly \$1,000. All the money that he possessed, and six months from his law practice. It had cost Douglas eighty thousand dollars, of his private fortune to save his seat in the United States senate and to discover a new political power that was to rival him for the leadership of the American people. Lincoln was greatly disappointed when his political party set him aside, but remarked, "I believe I have made some marks which will tell for civil liberty long after I am gone. The fight must go on." There is an old saying that the "truth never dies." The man who takes the world philosophically can never be permanently beaten. He said, I have always been a fatalist, and what is to be, will be, or as Hamlet says, "There is a divinity that shapes our ends, rough hew them how we will." That which is greatest in life rises.

Lincoln at 51, was still poor in money, but becoming very rich in reputation. There came loud calls for him from distant cities. He found that his defeat for the U. S. senate was once again a victory, the stepping stone upon which he was to rise to greater heights.

When the call came and he spoke at Cooper Institute, New York City, N. Y., Feb. 27, 1860, before that

great assemblage of intellect—a test of his national greatness, in this world of compensation, his message stirred the populace as had nothing else since the Declaration of Independence, as they listened spell-bound to his wisdom as he laid before them the entire constitutional and legislative history of the institution of slavery since the nation was founded. The words rang through the amphitheatre as he quoted from Frederick Douglass, “It is written in the sky of America that the slaves shall some day be free.” That great audience rose to its feet enmass. They had found their champion, at last, in this frontier lawyer, with inspired patriotism, who loomed before the nation as a master of men.

There is nothing in this world that merely happens, as a matter of chance. The conditions that were now gathering about him were the cumulative results of a long life of work and faith. Public opinion was now hopelessly divided over slavery.

Abraham Lincoln was recognized as a great statesman, and when the Republicans gathered in Chicago’s wigwam, May 16, 1860 to choose the leader, he was made the candidate for President of the United States. The tumult that rose in that auditorium had never before been witnessed in American politics. (My

father, J. Randolph Scott, was present on the rostrum by John M. Roberts of Morton, Illinois, a "Teller" of the convention and related the pandemonium that followed the convention's decision).

Nine states of the south did not respond and the silence was greeted with hisses and jeers. Lincoln did not resent the jeers and sneers poked at him but calmly replied that his life presented nothing but "the short and simple annals of the poor."

When he was informed of his election over Stephen A. Douglas, his opponent, Nov. 6, 1860, he excused himself from his friends to go home and tell his wife, "We are elected." Rousing cheers followed him, but on his heart there now rested the burden of the nation. His heart turned to the old log cabin days and to the simple woman, who as his stepmother, had come into the desolation of his boyhood. It was a long drive and the river was filled with running ice but he made the dangerous passage and arrived at the woman's humble home. Tears came into their eyes, as she embraced him with deep emotion. "Good bye, Abraham," she said, "I know I shall never see you again. I know your enemies will kill you." The tall sad-faced man caressed her and said gently, "No, no mother; they will not do that, Trust in the

Lord and all will be well." Then going to the unmarked and neglected grave of his father, (Thomas Lincoln, who died February, 1851, age 73), he stood over it in reverie, and asked that, a suitable tombstone be erected.

Lincoln's last speech to his neighbors when leaving his home, February 11, 1861, at Springfield, Illinois to go to the White House, Washington, D. C., "My Friends: No one, not in my situation, can appreciate my feelings of sadness at this parting. To this place and to the kindness of these people, I owe everything. Here I have lived a quarter of a century, and have passed from a young to an old man. Here my children were born, and one is buried. I now leave, not knowing when or whether ever I may return, with a task before me greater than that which rested upon Washington. Without the assistance of that Divine Being, who ever attended him, I cannot succeed. With that assistance, I cannot fail, trusting in Him who can go with me, and remain with you, and be everywhere for good, let us confidently hope that all will yet be well. To His care commending you, as I hope in your prayers you will commend me, I bid you an affectionate farewell."

No man ever came into American politics under more adverse conditions. The final test of a man's

ability is responsibility. Lincoln had the ability to lead men.

When the world thinks that a man has won, his struggles have just begun.

When Lincoln stood before the throng at the national capitol to be inaugurated President of the United States, the first government of the people, by the people and for the people, that the world had ever known, he stood as the personification of the principles upon which the republic is founded.

As he stood there pledging himself to preserve, protect and defend the constitution and the union, he said, "We are not enemies, but friends. We must not be enemies. The mystic chord of memory, stretching from every heart over this broad land, will yet swell the chorus of the union, when again touched, as surely they will be by the better angels of our nature." The oath of office came from his lips and Abraham Lincoln, the son of a log cabin, held the future of a nation in his arms.

Abraham Lincoln entered the White House with a heavy heart. Seven historic states had withdrawn and established a new republic to be known as the "Confederate States of America." He, to establish the new spirit of republicanism in power, had gathered about him a

cabinet composed of his rivals for political honors and had not appointed one personal friend and not one who had known him a year before. He, with his keen insight of human nature and the instinctive understanding of men—gave words of hope and courage while in his mind he was working out the solution in the mighty problem of maintaining the American one and inseparable.

The man who can control other men without their realizing it is in himself great. The firm decision of gentleness has won more victories than aggressive force. Native common sense was now in contest with statesmanship.

A man must be willing to resign to the inevitable. The inevitable had come. Fort Sumpter was fired on (April 12, 1861) serving the bonds of brotherhood. The philosophy of Lincoln had come true—the house was now divided and the tragedy of it all lay before his eyes.

Lincoln had faith in the common people whose hearts had never failed to respond when duty called them—and never will. The lines of this great army of humanity have never been known to break when standing on the battle-line of civilization. And so it was when he called for volunteers to defend the nation's flag. Floods of men poured into the national capitol and in July,

1861 there were 300,000 under the stars and stripes.

Sunday, July 21, 1861, Lincoln went to church (the New York Avenue Presbyterian, where he was always present at prayer meeting).

The city was aroused. The north and the south were in deadly combat. In the first battle of Bull Run, at Manassas, Va., the confederates were victorious.

Lincoln greeted the disheartened soldiers with the grasp of a warm heart. On his face was the expression of determination of a man who had learned how to grow strong in defeat. He understood life. Bull Run was nothing more than the price that is paid for experience. His life had been full of Bull Run's, and from every defeat he had gained a great victory. The only value of yesterday is the experience that we learn from it.

There is one quality that always comes to the aid of a man in time of adversity—it is patience. This was forcibly demonstrated by Lincoln during the early days of the American fratricidal war, when he listened to the impatience of the north without reply.

Miss Mary Todd of Lexington, Ky., became the wife of Abraham Lincoln, Nov. 4, 1842. Both southerners by birth they found many of their dearest friends under the flag

of the Confederacy. Her own family was arrayed against the Union, yet she was always loyal to her husband and ever expressed faith in him and his cause.

The flag of the Confederacy (stars and bars) floated on the bluffs across the Potomac river in Virginia. Soldiers were at his door barricading his home into a fortress. Lincoln turning to his wife and children urged them to flee from the city in safety. The terror stricken woman looked into the sad face of her husband and clinging to his arm, whispered, "I am as safe as you, I shall never leave you here alone."

The greatest gift that man has ever known is moral courage. Sept. 22, 1862 Lincoln called his cabinet on important business, he having prepared a paper of much significance. I have made a promise to myself and to my Maker, I am now going to fulfill that promise. The man upon whom they had looked as without power of decision, sat before them with grim determination. In the might of "decision" he had with a single blow issued to the world "The Emancipation Proclamation," that was to break the shackles of bondage and to shake the foundations of civilization. "I do it, he said, only to save the Union." "I can only trust in God." Lincoln signed it January 1, 1863.

He had freed three millions of a race that had been held in bondage almost since the world began.

Upward and onward the Negro has plodded from poverty and ignorance to enlightenment and livelihood. Handicapped by a small racial heritage, extreme poverty and lack of sympathy the Negro has gradually won for himself a place in the soul of America. The Negro race since its freedom (73 years) has advanced more rapidly than any other race during that given time in the history of mankind.

His life was threatened. "How hard it is to die, unless I can make the world understand that I would be willing to die if I could be sure I am doing my work toward lifting the burden from mankind."

The south now arose in vengeance to strike a staggering blow at the man who had despoiled them of their property. The mighty columns of the Confederacy were sweeping toward the north, vowing that they would unfurl their flags over the Capitol at Washington and force a prostrate nation to return their property to them.

The legions of the south stood against the hosts of the north at Gettysburg for three days and there were defeated in one of the decisive battles of the world—now that the army of the Confederacy

had been driven from northern soil and was fleeing back to its valley—he thanked God.

There is a place in the world for every man and a man for every place.

The moment that was moulding the future of the western world was in early March, 1864, when Ulysses S. Grant came to the White House and President Lincoln bestowed upon him the highest military honor, which none but Washington among American soldiers had ever borne on the battle field—the commission which gave him the destiny of an army,—“I feel the full weight of the responsibilities devolving upon me.” He marshaled about him the legions that were to lead a republic to glorious triumph. The right man now in the right place. In the summer of 1864 the success of the great armies swung back and forth with almost endless precision.

Lincoln was nominated for re-election with much dissension, but he said, “I have pledged myself to preserve the union and I believe that the people will give me a chance to finish the work that I have begun.” Nov. 8, 1864 he was again elected by nearly a half million votes, having carried all but three states. “I give thanks to the Almighty for the evidence of the

people's resolution to stand by free government and the rights of humanity." '

The fourth of March, 1865—the day of inauguration, a light rain was falling in the chill and gloom. As Lincoln appeared on the steps a rousing cheer greeted him. He spoke in inspiration. “Let us judge not that we be not judged,” he said. “Fondly do we hope, fervently do we pray that this scourge of war may speedily pass away.” With malice toward none, with charity for all, with firmness in the right, as God gives us to see the light, let us stand on to finish the work we are in;—and do all which may achieve and cherish a just and lasting peace among races, and with all nations. As he stood before the cheering throng, the sun burst through the clouds in splendor.

While Lincoln was winning his battles over the people, his silent little general was carrying the armies to victory. A dispatch—Richmond has fallen; Lincoln went to the front. The hosts of the republic marched, with drums and flying colors, into the fallen capitol. The nation's capitol was waiting in expectancy, "Fellow Citizens," he said, "We meet this evening not in sorrow but in gladness of heart. In this happiness, however, Him from whom all blessings flow must not be forgotten. He stood with

his head bowed while the martial notes of the Star Spangled Banner passed through the crowd and then called. Give us Dixie! We have a right to that tune now. As he entered the White House, "This" he said, "is one of the happiest moments of my life."

Peace hath its victories no less than war.

There was not a more inspiring moment throughout the four years of magnificent courage than on April 9, 1865, when the hosts of the south stood before the victorious warriors of the republic to pledge themselves to peace and brotherhood.

The two greatest generals that the world has ever known stood face to face, Ulysses S. Grant and Robert E. Lee. Behind them were the armies of the mightiest struggle that has ever been recorded in human annals. The war was over! The miracle of the reunited people had been performed, and above it all loomed the strong figure of one man—Abraham Lincoln.

The corner stone of America is civil and religious liberty or idealism, what other nation can say as much?

Washington had little but idealism when he led the continental armies to victory. Our Lincoln rebuilt the land, using his ideals as

the brick and the mortar as he placed the hand of the north in the hand of the south and cemented the union.

Our heroic Presidents, Washington and Lincoln, in a way created a symbol, which rise up and call "My Country."

Washington's prophetic vision of 1787—"corrected in blood."

Lincoln had kept his sons, young as they were, constantly interested in the great affairs which occupied him in the white house. Robert was a captain in the army, William W. died in 1862, Tad, now twelve, was his father's constant companion and was with him when he was speaking from a white house window two days after Lee's surrender to Grant. "What shall we do with the confederates?" asked the President and a voice answered from the crowd, "Hang them!" Tad hearing the words, and looking up into his father's pained face, shouted out, "No, no, papa, not hang them! Hang on to them." Mr. Lincoln smiled down gratefully, to his son for giving him just the right answer to the impulsive question as he shouted from the window, "Tad, has got it. We must hang onto them."

The greatest man in the world is the man who loves his fellow-men. The revengeful assassin brought

Lincoln to life's greatest moment—
Life's last triumph! Was there ever
a greater victory? Was there ever
a man whose tribute from the world
was more beautiful?

Was there ever a procession like
this—nearly two thousand miles of
a people's tribute!

Home again in Springfield, where
he longed to rest after his work
was done.

In memory—in influence—he
still lives on.

WASHINGTON AND LINCOLN

Washington and Lincoln, they
march ahead today,
Hewing out a trail for us, showing
us the way—

Showing us that valor lives, and
courage never dies:
And that hope may dawn again in
sad, lack-luster-eyes!

Washington and Lincoln—straight
and tall and grave—
What a legacy they left, what a gift
they gave!

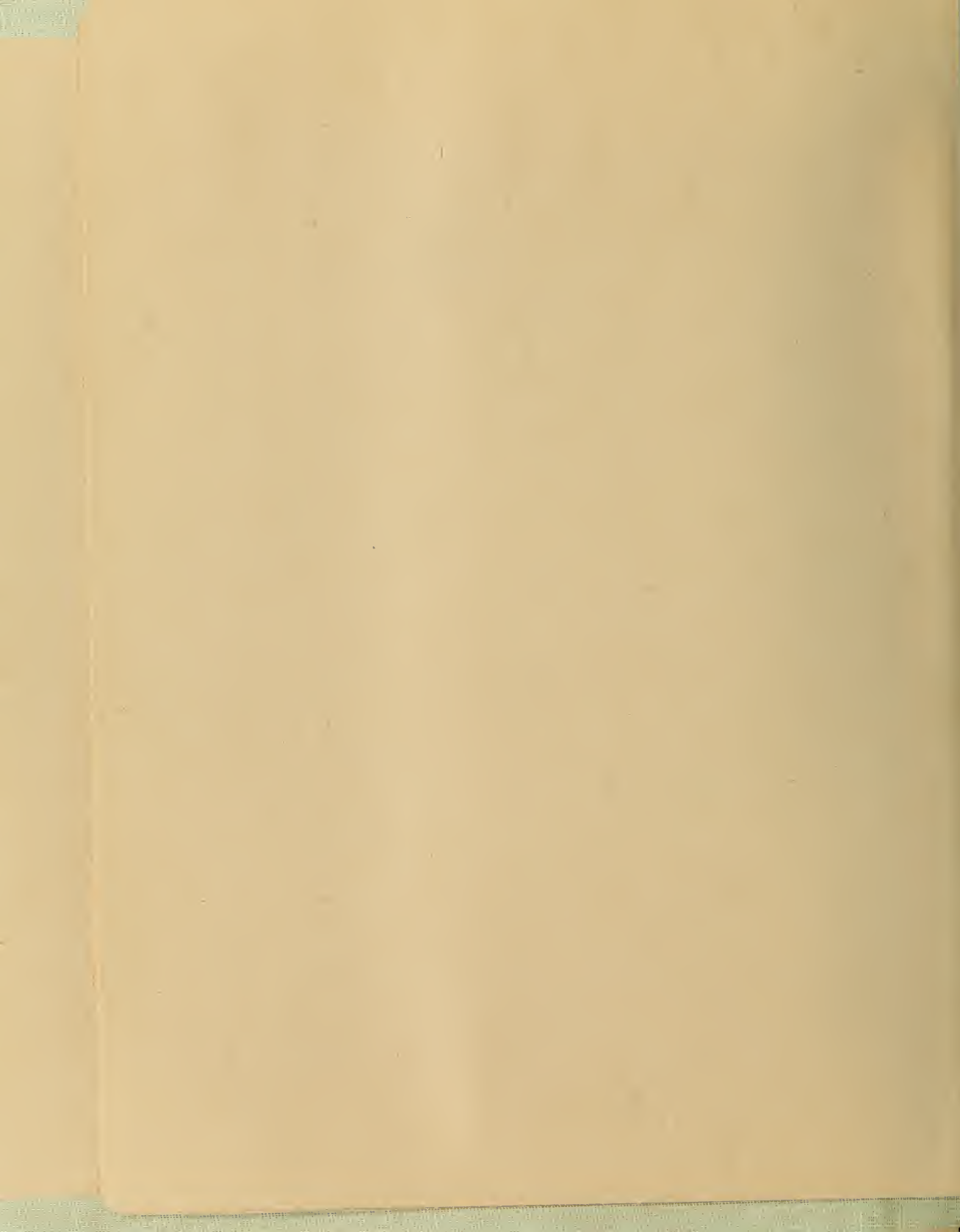
What a gift, transcending all little
doubts and hates—
For they gave, by sacrifice, these
United States.

Lincoln and Washington—to day
they march ahead,
Carrying a banner that is white and
blue and red;
Telling us that lips will smile, and
hearts once more will sing,
When the nation learns to join in
love and neighboring!

Lincoln and Washington—pioneers
are they,
Hewing out a trail for us, showing
us the way;
Telling us of brave ideals, on which
the nation stands,
Blessing us, across the years, with
dim, uplifted hands!

By Margaret E. Sangster.

(The above poem taken from the
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